

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, March 2, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, March 2, 1844.

My Dear General, While I write the guns and Bells are still sounding, which mark the melancholy procession in attendance on the remains of the Sentries and others to the Tomb, who perished by the explosion of the Gun of the Princeton. 1 It is I think the greatest concourse I ever witnessed on a like occasion—greater than that which waited on Genl. Harrison's obsequies. The mass fills the avenue on the foot pavements and the carriage from the Presidents House to the Capitol. This administration began its first year with a funeral gloom having its origin in the first death of a tenant of the White House. The last year of this Administration is entered upon with a carnage of the cabinet, which has made the East room look like a charnel House. The bodies of five friends of the president have just been borne out of his mansion. The day is suitable to the sad scene. The Heavens are hung with black. The surrounding Hills are covered with a smoke that renders them almost invisible and the city filled with a suffocating dust, as dense under the cold east wind as ever in our sultry August. It is enough, all the

1 The bursting of the great gun on the Princeton during a holiday excursion down the Potomac on Feb. 22, 1844, resulted in the death of the Secretary of State (Upshur), the Secretary of War (Gilmer), and other officials.

class=MsoNormal>0294 270 concomitants considered, to make the superstitious feel that providence has averted its face from the power installed by the fine orgies of 1840.

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If the demoralization of a people, and the prostitution of a Govt. before virtuous, can be supposed to claim the regard of Heaven, there may be some ground in reason for the belief that the frown which has fallen on our public men and public affairs has been provoked. I am not in the habit of ascribing striking manifestations, connected with the affairs of this world to supernatural causes, but I must confess, that the remarkable occurrences and disasters which have attended the footsteps of Coonery, impress me somewhat superstitiously.

But I turn from this gloomy subject to hoped for better prospects. Our friends are going to work in earnest, to redeem our cause and country. There will be nothing that ought to be done, that will not be done by the honest hearted Democracy. That it will succeed I cannot doubt. The infamous means employed in 1840 against us and now again encouraged by Clay cannot prevail a second time in succession. And Dear, Dear, General, the providence which has preserved amidst such threatening circumstances, to witness the triumph of your cause, will again preserve you to see its restoration. I hope you will not tax your strength with cares and troubles. If there is any thing that a friend can do, for your comfort and convenience, let me entreat you to put it on me, for whom you have done so much. You can wish nothing in the compass of my power, that it will not give me joy to satisfy.

I fear, Dear General, that my long letters are troublesome to you, because, you are so punctual in answering them. I hope you will not exhaust yourself by paying me line for line. One line, saying how you are, will repay a volume of my scribbling which you can throw aside when you are tired. Emuckfau is rapidly growing with the royal weight of the House of Priam. Two years hence, I don't despair, but you will hear of the young Scion of the Hermitage triumphing on the Turf. . . .